



## **Spotlight: Macomb County**

### **Great place to build a business – GLITR, 9/13/10**

Nestled on 31 miles of Lake St. Clair shoreline with 27 safe and diverse communities, Macomb County is home to more than 840,000 people and 28,000 businesses.

The Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development works to ensure that this southeastern Michigan area builds upon its reputation as a great place to live and build a successful business. Current projects range from the development of a business incubator that specializes in the defense and homeland security industries to an initiative to equip county buildings with energy efficient upgrades to the construction of a 70-mile network of connected hike and bike trails. The department relies on a vast network of connections to make things happen.

Not surprisingly, one of the highest priorities of the department is in retaining, growing and attracting business in the county.

According to Executive Director Stephen Cassin, "We are proactively working to replace jobs lost in the auto industry. A targeted industries study we commissioned in 2006 has helped us to narrow our focus to several industries including defense/homeland security, aerospace, advanced manufacturing and alternative energy."

Defense, in particular, is an industry with stronghold in Macomb County. Home to the United States Army's Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) and its TACOM Research, Development And Engineering Center (TARDEC) and the Selfridge Air National Guard and U.S. Army Garrison, there are more than 500 organizations in the county with ties to the defense industry. Since 2000, Macomb County companies have generated more than \$16 billion in defense contracts. In fact, more than 65 percent of all defense related work within the State of Michigan originates in Macomb County.

Helping existing companies to transition to meet the demands of other industries has been an important focus of the department. Cassin attributes recent successes of the department to the strong relationships it has developed with many economic development agencies.

"Our business development staff members meet regularly with local, regional, and statewide partners to offer our business clients coordinated access to a spectrum of services and programs that lead to business success," Cassin said. "As a result of our connections with others, we are able to offer each of our clients a customized package

of assistance that can include access to financing options, employee training programs, business plan development, and marketing strategies -- even assistance in exporting goods outside of the U.S.A.”

The strategy is working. So far during 2010, MCPED clients have invested nearly \$54 million in buildings and equipment, retained 783 jobs and created 975 new ones.

Assistance to business is a specialty of the department. Housing a regional headquarters of the Michigan Small Business Development and Technology Centers, the department is also especially adept at helping start-up and second stage companies reach success. As testament to the abilities of MCPED staff, in the last three years, three clients were recognized as a Michigan Best Small Business and six were including in Michigan’s “50 Companies to Watch” program.

The department works with businesses of all types and at every stage of development. From assisting the would-be entrepreneur in realizing his or her dream of beginning a small business, to helping a major manufacturer diversify to serve a new industry, MCPED stands ready to assist.

To learn more about the Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development, visit [www.MacombBusiness.com](http://www.MacombBusiness.com) or call (586) 469-5285.

Note: Today's Spotlight was sponsored by the Macomb County Department of Planning & Economic Development. For information on how you can sponsor content in the Spotlight, contact Josh Nash at (248) 455-7212 or [josh.nash@cbsradio.com](mailto:josh.nash@cbsradio.com).